

Q U A R T E R L Y   N E W S L E T T E R

# CITY VOICES

Summer 2017

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## CITY VOICES

**A Community-Centered  
Music-Education Program**

City Voices is a 501(c)(3) Organization as  
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## Summer Music Academy Wrap-Up

The 2017 Summer Music Academy marked the 5<sup>th</sup> Summer Session and 4<sup>th</sup> full year since City Voices embarked on its founding programming! This Quarter, we had many milestones to celebrate from brand new programming to Miss America Pageant Contestants. Looking ahead, we plan to incorporate some of the successes found this Summer that Students enjoyed most, including a Musical Theatre Curriculum.

## Save the Date!

### City Voices Open House

Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>

4:30pm – 7:30pm

At City Voices Studios

Featuring Performances by: Napoleon Douglas,  
Courtney Krause, Chris Powell, Sara Routh,  
Jessica Saunders, and Michael Xayavong.

### Fall Session

**Begins!**

Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>

New Offerings:

\*Musical Theatre Troupe

\*ACT Tutoring

\*How-To-College Series



## Summer Music Academy Wrap-Up

This summer, we expanded our programming to offer multiple subjects of Private Instruction and a plethora of Enrichment Classes that focused on performance techniques, STEM academic excellence and College preparation.

### Musical Theatre Camps

The Summer Academy brought back our High School Musical Theatre Camp, taught by Adjunct Artist Michael Xayavong who was the camp instructor last year. That camp ended with a showcase of the students work! We also introduced a Musical Theatre Ensemble Camp, led by Project Coordinator Napoleon Douglas and Intern JJ Binion, who is pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre at Drake University

### A Cappella Camp

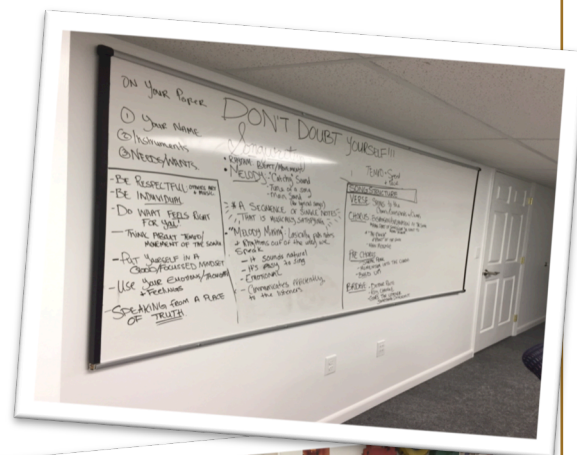
Students worked with Teaching Artist Chris Powell and Project Coordinator Napoleon Douglas to set some of their favorite songs into multiple-part vocal arrangements where they focused on vocal blend, beat boxing, performance practices, and ended with a showcase for family and friends.

### Songwriting Camp

Local Artist Courtney Krause graciously joined our team this summer as our instructor for Songwriting Camp. Throughout the week, students learned about the importance and power of words through music, the different types and varieties of songs, and remedies for writer's block. The week ended with a showcase of their marvelous work.

### Guitars, Technology, & Dartanyan

Dartanyan Brown is a 5-time inductee into Iowa's Rock 'n Roll, Jazz, and Blues Halls of Fame, and we are so fortunate to have him with us as a Teaching Artist. He ended the Summer Music Academy teaching both Guitar Instrumental Techniques and Telling Stories with Music Technology, where students improved their guitar playing skills and learned a lot about certain new-age technologies used today in performance practice.



## Keyboard Theory

The Des Moines King of The Dueling Pianos Chris Powell brought his experience, education and talents to City Voices as he spent the entire 8-week session teaching a Keyboard Theory Class. The class introduced Students to keyboard skills, focusing on practical skills needed to begin self-accompaniment. They learned to read, play, and create, as well as music theory from contemporary and popular music based on the renowned Berklee College of Music's PULSE online theory course, including video, audio and composition.



## College Prep Music Theory

Our Executive Director Mary Anne Sims toggled between her business hat and music-educator hat this Summer as she taught College Prep Music Theory. The class studied topics covered in a typical first-year college music theory class. Current City Voices High School Participants, as well as CV College Alum, took advantage of the instruction given by the leader of our charge!



## How-To-College Series

The Summer Academy featured another weekly offering in its collection of How-To-College Sessions, which were presentations geared to provide College preparatory resources to our Students.

The following sessions were offered:

### **Discussing their Journey: City Voices recent Graduates discussed their journey's after High School**

*Panel: Mayte Gomez-Cruz, Matt Hawkins, Allegra Hernandez, Daniela Ortiz, and Michael Xayavong*

### **What the FASFA?**

*This course was designed to answer the questions about how to navigate FASFA and Financial Aid*

**Instructor:** Tristan Lynn - Student Financial Aid Program Specialist, Iowa College Aid

### **Does the Shoe Not Fit?**

*This information delivered in this course answered questions about transferring, dual-school programming (such as the DMACC relationship with ISU), and the basics of selecting the appropriate degree programs in the best schools for students.*

**Instructor:** Ryan Williamson - High School Guidance Counselor, Des Moines Public Schools

### **College Search - What College Is Right for Me?**

*Students explored the many options for college--kinds of degrees, kinds of schools--and the learned how to choose one that suits your personality, learning style, financial situation and career goals.*

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Keest Sedrel - Communications Coordinator, Iowa College Aid

### **Hidden Costs - What Tuition Pays for, and What Does It Not**

*Students were shown what expenses to prepare for on top of tuition, and were taught how to compare financial aid offers from different schools.*

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Keest Sedrel - Communications Coordinator, Iowa College Aid

### **How to Start Now: How can I use High School to get ready for College**

*This course is designed to help students understand the importance of a good G.P.A., how to use high school resources such as your school counselor, standardized testing resources, developing useful study habits, and any other various topics students may overlook the importance of.*

**Instructor:** Erin Valerio-Garsow - GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator, Iowa College Aid





## Fall Session Programming

Our Fall Session will be filled with our classic offerings as well as some brand new resources that we are excited to delve into! The Fall Session begins the day after Labor Day – Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Private Voice and Guitar will remain available with the Teaching Artists present in the Spring Session. Continuing from our Summer Music Academy we have Keyboard Theory and College Prep Music Theory.

The new programming City Voices has to offer includes: Musical Theatre Ensemble Troupe for Students interested in enhancing live theatre performance techniques; Vocal

Studio Ensemble, which will be a small vocal ensemble who prepares repertoire for formal events and community occasions that City Voices may be a part of; and ACT Tutoring - Kyle Johnson of Principal Financial Group will be joining the tutoring program that his colleague Philip Sandager has developed for us and expand the curriculum to also include ACT Test Preparation.

Our Fall Session will have a big kick off this year with the following events you don't want to miss!

**Open House – Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**How-To-College Intensive - Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017**



## How to Apply for Fall!

Due to the high volume of interest for the program, beginning this Fall there will be a limited space for Students who want to participate. For this reason, we encourage applicants to register as soon as possible. There are two ways to get registered:

**Paper Application:** Available at City Voices Studios or at [www.cityvoicesdesmoines.org](http://www.cityvoicesdesmoines.org).

**Online Application:** Available at our website. (NOTE: If you choose this method you WILL have to find time in the near future to fill out Paper Application for Student and Parent Signatures.



## Recent News and Updates!

### Students hit the Stage

Recent Roosevelt Graduate Demarius Fisher and Incoming Lincoln Senior Lorena Escobar have both been cast in The Des Moines Playhouse's upcoming production of *A Chorus Line*. Lorena will be playing Diana Morales and Demarius will be Richie Walters.

We are so excited to see some of our own talent being showcased in the community!



### Broadway Bound

Incoming Roosevelt Senior Heaven Booker spent a portion of her summer apart of the Broadway Intensive Camp put on by Des Moines Performing Arts. This gave her the opportunity to work with Guest Broadway performers in weeklong series master classes refining the "triple threat" – singing, dancing and acting. Way to go,



### Bravo!

Incoming East Sophomore Damaris Nelson represented City Voices at one of our sponsor's events - Bravo Greater

Des Moines' 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Palette Event, a report to the region about the arts in Greater DSM. Bravo administers a competitive and accountable grantmaking program for arts, cultural and heritage nonprofits in the region. Bravo is supporting City Voices with a FY2018 grant, making or



### "Oh, Say Can You Sing?"

Students who were around for our A Cappella Camp this summer joined other City Voices students to sing the National Anthem! This took place at the Iowa Democratic Party's Annual Hall of Fame Dinner.



## At The Church House

Recent North High graduates Sameeah Muhammed and Mercedes Castillo traveled over to the East Side to join the Sunday Morning Worship Service at Luther Memorial Church. Each of the ladies sang selections as thanks on behalf of City Voices, who is a part of their Community Grant that has assisted us in housing lessons and recitals.



## Summer Recital

Our Summer Recital was Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at Luther Memorial Church. Students demonstrated the hard work put in throughout their private lessons through beautiful Classical Pieces, Art Songs, and Musical Theatre Sections.



## 80/35 & Blaze Pizza

Our friends at Blaze Pizza offered City Voices a wonderful opportunity by donating a percentage of their money earned during business hours. We, on the other hand, got both donations and great pizza! The Des Moines Music Coalition donated \$1103 of their tip money received at a beverage tent at 80/35 (Thank you to Volunteers for staffing 24hrs of shifts!)



## The Big Apple

Bidding our farewells and well wishes to Project Coordinator Napoleon M Douglas, who made his permanent move to New York City this summer to further pursue his stage performance career! Napoleon has earned his way into the Actors Equity Association – the U.S. Labor Union representing professional Actors and Stage Managers. It's now his time to hit all the Broadway-level auditions and get back on stage. Break legs!



## Who is Miss Iowa?

For those of us at City Voices following along at home, we were thrilled when word came that **Teaching Artist Chelsea Dubczak**, the reigning Miss Metro 2017, who was competing in the Miss Iowa contest June 22-24, had won both the Lifestyle and Fitness and Talent preliminary contests on Night One. But we were not surprised, since this dynamic young lady, whose platform "Ladies Who Lift" was inspired by her experience as a personal trainer and an avid fitness participant and who was a vocal performance major, is indeed a stunning combination of strength and beauty. And it was no surprise when, one night later, she was crowned "Miss Iowa 2017," after a whirlwind weekend of competition, fulfilling a childhood dream.

Chelsea has been a Teaching Artist at City Voices for almost 2 years now, so we know about her gifts! One of her students, Tatum Clayburn (12, Roosevelt), describes her as "humble, selfless, talented, kind hearted, beautiful, and so many more things. But most of all, she's a teacher." To be sure, Chelsea has the right skill set to lead our young singers: she started voice lessons at the beginning of her freshman year in high school, in Holmen, WI, where at her second lesson her teacher stated, "Girl, you are going to be an opera singer." This prediction proved true, and Chelsea received her Bachelor of Music degree from Drake University in 2015, where she competed and received high placements in the prestigious NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) and MTNA (Music Teachers' National Association) contests. She also served as the Drake Choir Secretary/Treasurer and President, was seen as "the Queen" in the Chamber Choir's Madrigal Dinners, and sang in 2 operas. She then ended her college career as the soprano soloist in Mozart's challenging "Requiem." But then, this level of musical involvement and achievement are not surprising for a young lady who, in high school, was Drum Majorette, flute section leader, first chair saxophone, and a participant in Show Band, Show Choir, Vocal Jazz, Theater, Solo Contest, and Concert Choir. She was even voted "Best Instrumentalist" by her Graduating Class!

When she graduated, she auditioned for a variety of cruise ships to be a singer/entertainer. But her heart was calling her in multiple directions, and she embarked upon a life divided between personal training, her pageant competitions, and her work as a private voice instructor. She currently coaches 7 students in voice, piano, theory and ear training, and she loves it, saying

"Music has given me so much, and it is so rewarding to give that gift to others." She elaborates that "Anytime I can help a student conquer a difficulty, I beam with glowing momma pride. Whether that's stage fright, difficult pitches [or] diction, or counting, [when] they work to get through it I know my job means something." She is careful to include the foundation of classical training in every song her students study, for she says allows them to "sing anything with solid technique." She goes on to joke, "God help me if any of my students go on to be professional musicians without the ability to read key signatures, or use vibrato!"

Chelsea had plenty of chances to be a "proud momma" this year, as 100% of her students participating in the State Solo Contest received Division I ratings, the highest possible. And like a mother, she also was teaching lessons that go beyond the voice studio: Samantha

Watson (Roosevelt, 2017) said "She helped me be more confident in my voice and eased my nerves about going to college." Damaris Nelson (10, East) noted, "I appreciate her taking the time to get to know me as an individual, along with bettering me musically." This flexibility may explain her Pandora playlists, which range from "Celtic radio" to "Dubstep radio" to "Classical." And she definitely exhibits a similar varied taste in her love for incredibly varied outdoor activities, listing "kayaking, reading on the beach, hiking, slacklining and horseback riding" as favorites, declaring "You name it, I'm game!"

It has definitely been a full year for Chelsea, but there is much more to come. She has an active appearance schedule, part of her year-long Miss Iowa term responsibility. She is also very busy with preparations for the Miss America Pageant, taking place September 6-10 in Atlantic City, NJ (televised September 10), and practicing her opera aria for the talent competition, which she describes as "90 seconds of singing glory" and gives her a chance to perform once again, which she loves. She will have more opportunities to perform during her year-long Miss Iowa term as well, including a yet-to-be-announced engagement she describes as an "incredible opportunity." Yet despite this hectic agenda, she still makes time to teach her City Voices students weekly; and despite her incredible achievements, she humbly insists that teaching allows her to "see how much I have yet to learn." On the contrary, we at City Voices are privileged to learn from her - and we can't wait to see how far she will go!





# ‘Challenging In The Right Way’

## Student Spotlight – Terry Nguyen

Terry Nguyen (Hoover, class of 2017) has faced real academic challenges as a "mathlete" on the Central Academy Math Team - in fact, as a freshman he won a National Championship as part of this group. He will surely face more next year, once again a freshman, at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. But he has challenged himself in other ways as well, as a longtime voice student at City Voices, and that has proved just as satisfying!

Terry, who studies with Teaching Artist Amanda Lowe, was in his middle school choir in 7th grade and enjoyed it - however, when he entered 8th grade, his school removed choir from the curriculum, and so he was no longer able to sing. He missed it, and, significantly, felt as though he lost some of his skill level. So when he entered Hoover High School, and his teacher, Alex Fitzgerald, told him about the City Voices program, he jumped at the chance; three years later, he continues to challenge himself, not only taking voice lessons, but also digging into the theory side of music, where he enjoyed learning about the "parts that lead to music," as well as enrolling in Keyboard classes with Teaching Artist Chris Powell, because it allows him to "play the notes I [can't] sing." And although he had no prior experience with private lessons, he quietly built his skills to the point where he was able to participate in Chamber Choir, one of the elite Hoover choirs.

Terry also participated in State Solo Contest, where his culminating performance as a senior was to earn an "Excellent" rating for his performance of two classical vocal pieces. It was a significant achievement for a young man who says that "It took a long time to find a song that he want[ed] to sing," because he is "picky." But when he found "Vaga Luna," by Bellini, Terry knew he wanted to sing it. He now describes it as his "changing point as a musician," for his pitch and

diction were much better, and he was "a lot more relaxed." In fact, he emphasizes that learning to "relax and release [jaw] tension" has been pivotal to his development, saying that his "tone [has] improved greatly."

Terry continued to work hard and improve; he also branched out into languages other than Italian. And in Terry's words, if "Vaga Luna" was the first song he really felt showcased his abilities, then "An Chloe," a German art song, was his "masterpiece." In this song, Terry was able to take "skills...learned singing Vaga Luna and [apply] them to An Chloe." No small task, given that it was written by no less than Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and remains a staple of the repertoire of singers much older. But Terry is not one to shrink from a challenge - he allows that An Chloe "was a hard song to learn, but it was challenging in the right way." His performance of these two songs at the City Voices Senior Recital in May confirmed his teacher's assessment that "Terry has been a dedicated student from day one. He is always using new vocal techniques to improve his musicianship in performance. He has made great improvements in confidence, musicianship and music appreciation throughout his time at City Voices."

Terry intends to double major in Computer Science and Mathematics. With his studies and hobby of playing video games (a "nice distraction"), he will, no doubt, be very busy. But he also intends to make time to audition for the choir, and join or maybe even start an A Cappella group on campus, having been a part of several a cappella camps and groups during City Voices's Summer Music Academies. With his incredible work ethic and persistence, this shouldn't be a problem for him! Taking a moment to reminisce, Terry said, "I am glad I stayed with the program." We are glad as well!

## Congratulations Class of 2017!

**Mercedes Castillo** graduated from North High School. At NHS she has been in Science Bound, Upward Bound, Al Exito, Whyld Girls, Choir and Theater. She plans to attend Simpson College and pursue a major in Vocal Performance with a minor in Environmental Studies

**Demarius Fisher** graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School. He plans to attend the American Musical & Dramatic Academy in New York, New York.

**Quayvon Gowdy** graduated from Herbert Hoover High School. He plans to attend Iowa State University to study kinesiology and health, double majoring in Pre-Physical Therapy Exercise Science.

**Jordan Harris** graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School. She plans to attend the University of Iowa, where she will study Elementary Education.

**Tiffany Koger** graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School. She plans on attending DMACC to earn an associates degree in Animal Science.

**Meressa Moriarty** graduated from Herbert Hoover High School. At HHS, Meressa was in Non-Audition choir, Chamber choir, Hoover Harmony, and Honors Art. She plans to attend The University of Northern Iowa to study Psychology and Art.

**Sameeah Muhammed** graduated from North High School. She plans to attend the University of Iowa to major in Pre-Medicine.

**Joe Noble** graduated from North High School. He plans to attend Iowa State University to major in Computer Engineering. He will also be participating in their performing arts departments.

**Terry Nguyen** graduated from Herbert Hoover High School. He plans to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, where he will study Computer Science and sing in the choir.

**Rose Rocha** graduated from Scavo High School. She plans to take a year off to decide what she wants to do. Then, she will continue education in a year starting at DMACC for an associate's degree in liberal arts.

**Samantha Watson** graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School. She plans to attend Iowa State University to study Psychology and Pre-Med. She would like to be a psychiatrist.

# THANK YOU

City Voices is a Community-Centered Music-Education Program that provides affordable, high-quality private vocal, instrumental, performing art and academic instruction to underserved students of the Des Moines Metro Area. Without your endless support to Community, Student Excellence, and the Arts we could not be successful in our efforts. We would like to take this time to extend our dearest thanks to our supporters!

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## Special Thanks!

We would like to extend our deepest appreciations to Andrew Ryker and Jessica Saunders, who both joined us this summer as Guest Teaching Artists! Both ran their own private studio and their students were amazing with the high level of training they were given. Thank you!

**CITY VOICES**

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